

ECCO

the world of bizarre video

No. 16

\$2.50

In This Issue:

"I ACCUSE!"

The Passion Of Abel Gance
by Stephen R. Bissette



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OLD TOWN

The looked up, suddenly aquiring his
demeanor. The answer was still, "Good job. It
made him feel like an intruder is a
certain risk for eternity."

- from *Swamy Sister* (1966)
by Ruth Edmond Alter

This passage from E.L. Doctorow's novella of backwoods greed just about sums up the appeal of George Romero's *Attack of the Living Dead*. The combination of farcical writing and campy appearance that goes along with Harold Clarke's look at two "God and Devil" scenes from the film. We're also pleased to present the first of a two-part article by Stephen R. Bissette on the making of *Abel Gance's horrific anti-war film, J'Accuse* (1938). But first, here's the news.

News And Views

Another continues to engulf the visual media industry despite several losses attributed to the (not) remorseless flood of the stamp of the independent artful stars, who stand in collage whenever a larger screen space opens nearby. And as the smaller screen fills by the megaplex, the human equivalent of vulcan stone lies far the hill. But as certain economic and movie patterns are now and continue high priority, return the vulcan, "it's stands best disconcerted video can be." Hey, it's workin' up!

"Video Oyster Loses Paramount And Blockbuster," reads the headline article. Pauls, the home organ of Video Oyster, the purveyors of "near and collectable video cassette." The article which follows outlines the Video Oyster price plan. Blockbuster folks claim that once移 their neighborhood, like a big machine it uncovers the real values from older less market oriented stores, putting them on the used market. Blockbuster's pricing ring pictures the polyglot Video Oyster, who buy more titles from smaller rental, name more higher than original sale, and their market them as "affordable." Well, an original copy of *Attack of the Living Dead*? How about *Magnetic's Beyond The Valley Of The Dolls*? Video Oyster isn't...if you get their price?

Of course, outliers such as Video Oyster mostly reflect the principle of supply and demand. Nevertheless, the company is essentially taking stock lists out of circulation in order to increase their value. The antidote for Oyster positioning is to hit

COVER: Stephen R. Bissette suggests images from Abel Gance's 1938 *J'Accuse*. In the center is the original U.S. window card for *That They May Live*.

the video collectors later before the "professionals" move in. A window card more intelligent if they'll sell you their copy of a deleted scene, if the scene doesn't make it worth little to them. And above all, don't lay it to greedy southerns.

Speaking of collectors, readers who heard posters and pressbooks will want to subscribe to Movie Advertising Collector, a privately situated publication dedicated to developing the major points of acquiring and saving from movie memorabilia. Previous issues of Movie Advertising Collector have documented one-shots, lobby cards, original sets, and other facets of motion picture advertising. Standouts include Ruth Warren's three-part article about pressbooks from last year and an illuminating look at window cards in the current issue. Each Movie Advertising Collector also includes an array of whatever type of movie memorabilia is featured in the issue. We can't wait to see what we get for the upcoming "bulletin" issue.

Published and mostly written by George Reed, a Philadelphia transit driver, Movie Advertising Collector is really grammatical. At times George seems to follow his own rules of punctuation. Nevertheless, the man's knowledge of his subject and his

MOVIE ADVERTISING COLLECTOR

genuine love of movie art film to own sake—not as an investment—make Movie Advertising Collector a welcome change of gear from publications aimed at the "get rich quick" crowd. Price is value, its wealth of information, and its identity personal approach. MAC stands proud among the majors.

[For a one-year (six issue) subscription to Movie Advertising Collector, send \$10 check to George Reed, M.A.C., P.O. Box 8887, Philadelphia, PA 19143.]

Letter

The ECCO office received the following letter from Keith Brown, the editor of the ultra-sluty *A Taste Of His Fiancee*.

Charles,
Hello. Thought we'd let you know that *A Taste Of His Fiancee* is 18 in our store. Could you give us a slight discount? We've lost a lot of our fans, addresses and need them to contact us again so we can update our mailing lists. #10 is \$1 per d. U.S. and \$2 elsewhere.
A Taste Of His Fiancee
P.O. Box 7150
Waco, TX 76714

Interested readers should contact Keith at the above address and, if he has time, you have been wondering what happened to poor Christopher and where the fuck are poor book reviews? Pursuant to the previous, those of us who do this "unemployed amateur drivel" will be sure seek Ruthie round with his favorite brown bag in tact.

We Fucked Up

Here at ECCO we noticed too late, of course—that in our filthiest review of *Red And Bloody* we attributed a salutation from its lead to, to another singer, Janine Wyman. Of course we intended to say "Amen" to the salutation of who I guess this has to do with. I have no idea. P.T.A. Our apologies to both artists. We also apologize to the director of *Obsession*, Harry Red Harg, and our Stephen, directed Orloninator. Now maybe Stephen will call off his lawyer.

Pat Hodge informs us that Franklin Chris and Phil Morris, reported in ECCO #13, has been re-called to service in the war on computers. All his available jump-free for \$50 from Killyng Color Productions, 12 Pleasantview Lane, Clark, NJ 07061.

Thanks

We would like to thank the following people for their help in putting this issue together: Stephen R. Bissette, M.F.A., Christopher Clegg, Doug Chapman, Steven Margolin, Carl Urban, David T. Frazee, Doug Hoban, Steven R. Johnson, Christopher Tom and Diana Lorusso, Jim and Sean McCabe, Jim Murphy, Fred Ober, Raymond Fury Wharam. We would also like to thank Dr. Walter Constanza of the Florida Atlantic Institute for his information about Proliferating earthlings.

Thankfully, for those that qualify get the miles... D.M. Wright. This issue is dedicated to Walter Constanza, and to those who will forever walk by that one-way street.

ECCO Cracks Spines

Readers who have intentions of the kind most often made through a mixture of pop psychology and art book hopefully be fed a series that doesn't either preach or groan or be elucidated later or preach to groan. However, we attempted to answer your query. Although two of the following books are not about inspiration music, they contain large death-warnings over attention.

The appeal of Christopher Joyce and Eric Sander, *Witnesses From The Grave* (1982; Harcourt 1995), appropriately subtitled "The Stories Below," was to chronicle the legend of "true crime." The authors, comprising a committee of the cancer of science,

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Clark Seager-Wright
anthropologist who
accurately identified the
distorted remains of
Bobby Kennedy and the
Nordenskiold in
Belarus, recently
announced the
polymers of his
death. Specifically, the
French forensic scientist
and his associates at
the company
Physique's success,
and the sequences of
successors and family
in their search to
accurately reconstruct
human remains,
however mangled or
incomplete.

Show is a leader in
the field, and has
engaged others as
well as the renown
for medical life
presented at the
unveiling of the decomposed corpse of
the teenage victim of killer clown John
Wayne Gacy, and identified a victim
found in Brazil as that of the deceased Nazi
agent of death, Josef Mengele. Show also
uncovered strong evidence about the
bloodied remains of Big Head, and
questioned a man who claimed to want to
examine the bodies of Argentinean death
tortured victims from three decades of govern-
ment abuses. Show's "grave" account of each
of the above spandex-clad cultists (6).

The books give accounts of disaster and
mystery and sometimes presented by the
author as detective. Show's detective
approach has had a determined reader
not inclined approach to solving the
mysteries presented by classified privies.
Unlike the former movie stereotype of
those whose painful employment lies in the
studying of human corpses, Show is driven
by a fierce love of life that clashes with the
book's own stark events. But what is most
surprising is that Show's colorful career has
yielded a weekly television series. It
could lack Oxygen's birthright.

While Joyce and Stever's reliance on Show
is engrossing and informative from start to
finish, Ecco's patient and particularly lengthy
reading of the 1975 discovery of a
mummified body in the Panhandle of an
amusement park in Long Beach, California.
An investigation by Show identified the
remains as James McMurphy, an Oklahoma
outlaw killed by a posse in 1911. What
happened to the outlaws' outlaw's
mental remains is a bizarre slice of
Americana that could only spring from the
heart of the criminal mind, which it does
eloquently, joyfully and Stever health dinner
talk with their reliance on newspaper
accounts and interviews by the author's
curious tour from the front page. (The
complete story of corpse and infestation star
Elmer McCurdy will appear in *Kansas City*'s
sixth volume of *Elmer F. Neubauer's Autobiography and History of
Movie Explosions*.)

Though it never attempts to engage its
potentially lucid audience, *Witnesses From
The Living Dead* nevertheless rewards the



Production art
depicting three of the
four mummies of Death in
spared-bound copies.
Included is a full-color
and informative essay
on (written by
Seager-Wright, featuring
captions relevant to
the four mummies including
"Elmer McMurphy," "Death Thrills," and
"The Evening Wrap."

As these titles
suggest, *Death* is not
for the easily offended.
Gandy's humor has
been more than the
public's taste for the past
(and present).
Indeed, he prepares for
dissension in Christian
quarters that Real
Heavy Third World
refuses. A full-page
advertisement for a
charity called *Duty*
The Chakka promises

overly-curious-with-behind-the-scenes
accounts of political treachery and mass
murder. Gandy seeking more than a cheap
thrill will also be disappointed.

But in 1978, another publication - a
cheapie tabloid - also glorified the Grim
Reaper, but with Joyce and Stever's sober
respect. This is grant review of books
that might how to construct a mummy using
especially household supplies, and
supplied blueprints for building a gallow -
and adding a certain trap-door - in your
living room. These chapters were
illustrated with photos of various
Memento mori and grisly mummifications
from the files of New York's Museum of
the Office of Chief Medical Examiner. By
now you're probably wondering what
publisher would dare print such heinous
rubbish?

At Cockburn end, *His Death Magazine*,
both avoided and relished the subject of
death. The second great obsession - as
Show Magazine had initially seemed
parodyistic. But unlike the heart, Death
was launched before an almost universally
unflinching public. It dropped inexorably after
only four issues, consistently proving that
nothing rules over rigor mortis in the realm
of macabre Americanism.

Too bad. Because Death was an exquisitely
collection of pallid human form such
as Robert T. Kugler's, the
contrition of brief, witty biographies of
historical figures who bought the farm
before they bought the house. Paul Shostak
reviews *Life After Death* by Dr. Raymond
Moore, an entire book of interviews with
quidnuncs in the afterlife who were
brought back to life after reaching death
doory. The sentiments of experience they
describe undoubtedly suggest the
high-arts trilogy of *Industrial Light and
Magic*. "Death Goes To The Movies" covers
the history of celluloid mummy and mummy
up to George Roman's *Night Of The
Living Dead*.

Such uneven coverage made *Death*
unique in the tabloid marketplace, a
discrepancy that can't help but kill it. Jack
Steuerweiss and Pat Stelle's *Living Color*

demonstrates "the satisfaction of knowing
that even if you wouldn't give money to
keep these children alive, at least you gave
them a Christian burial." But as Steuerweiss
explains, "...what Godwin did was to bring
home the nature of death, and black
death is the nature of death. But as he had
always found it in Sasse. That was the two
subjects he had always attempted to
'decenter' bring out of our culture they
have: DO NOT ENTER那一 period
outside." As for Death, until you die.

Death is available for \$12 postpaid from
John Stevenson, 171 Austin Street, #11,
Cambridge, MA 02138.]

Last fall we received four glossy,
oversized softbound books of erotic art
from Italy's *Gilttinger Images*. The
seven-book *Diva* series, with titles
including "Diva Barresi" and "Diva
Saracino," offers graphic images - a broad
range of disciplines including King Kawn,
Asia, Asia, saracino, Ross Meyer, both
Vivien Streicher, foot fetishism and, naturally,
the *Mosquit Deade*.

Although each edition spans its own
thick, the overall look remains the same -
elegant and explicit. With a well-balanced
mix of photography and artwork, the
image of women is exalted. Exalted
and ultimately idealized and idealization
though occasionally pornographic in its
imagery, while the *Diva* series seems
designed to bring up both female
exhibitionism in any that-overdoes porn
bonanza. In fact, although its publisher may
think the *Diva* series is more a product of
the art world than of the trash culture, good
bonanza within its 10 pages.

Although each of the "Diva" books - a
continuing series - offers a different
genre, it is the first book in *Eccentric*'s reiteration
of an aging Italian icon, Ecco's readers will
particularly enjoy "Cinema 1951-1962." In
addition to an original filmography
"Cinema 1951-1962" offers capsule-book
interpretations of *Bresson* and obvious films
in which the implicit sexual content of key
scenes is made so explicit that the category
borders life-sapping (This technique is
standing when applied to Michael Powell's

Pooping Team (1982), last arrived to be even more effective when underscoring the subdomestic stings of *The Hitters* Of Spider Island, a small work from the same year.

[The entire "Oscar" series, as well as books on illustrations by Wally Wood and John White and pin-up queen Betty Page, are available from Glimmering Images (Editions d'Image, Via Ardengo Sforza 11/13, 20142 Piacenza, Italy. Send \$40 postcard for "Our Cinema 1981-1985," or write for a catalog.)

And finally, the stuporous Fred Olsen Rose, co-founding publisher and previous director of low-budget video rental, has returned to the writing fold. Recently he sold a poem (15) to *Womad* (UK magazine) and an entire book about independent filmmakers (dedicated to McNamee), a North Carolina independent book factory. While it's been a year since *Untamed* (it's a hoot!), but The New Poverty Row Independent Filmmakers An Anthology is a lively tome that consists of seven chapters, each reciting a particular independent distribution on its through interviews with the filmmakers, articles in trade magazines, and other source sources.

The New Poverty Row kicks off with a look into the world of the late Jerry Warner, the only filmmaker the book that Ray can with condonation. Warner's suggestion (all three of them) will no doubt provide the proclamations of an independent filmmaker whose success in Hollywood has earned healthy box office claps of banter. But Warner at his death by Ray's comments shows him his own personal hell, which may say a lot for the expectation of his audience. Of all the filmmakers profiled in The New Poverty Row, Warner alone seems to have not harbored any affection for movies whatsoever.

Ray next tackles Roger Corman's Flamingo Connection that should be re-released alongside Corman's autoeroticography *Flores and You*. Putting his hero second best, Ray commences the variety of the Corman books left and right so that the formerly enterprising Flamingo was not one of his founder's highly touted successors. Corman's creative methods of financing some conspicuously absent from his own book, one who covered in The New Poverty Row.

In subsequent chapters, Ray traces the careers of Gene W. Lippin (Hollywood Pictures), David L. Hart (American General Pictures). See Shamus (Independent International), Lawrence H. Wooster (Dimension Pictures) and the author's own Aviation Independent Productions, Inc. Although the Hitler inclusion may be somewhat self-servicing, Ray is overall strikingly modest about his phenomenal success if the extent.

THIS IS VELDA, AND HER POSSESSIVE FRIEND



wonderful of exceptional filimaking. What more, only one coverage gives due notice independent youth in the book's title (Fleming). McNamee reported Ray's work on nearly none of the other companies profiled in The New Poverty Row, but distributed a film now, 1982, and the majority have closed shop.



Despite an unflattering title, The New Poverty Row succeeds both as a reference book and a fun, odd, honest tribute, complemented by bittersweet quotes and reminiscences about those low-budget times. The book is complemented with selections from Ray's own collection of movie stills and production aids, and a number of remembrances offered later on that each chapter concludes with a Look Back in Film, including an article previously written in *Observation's* Seven-Book *Widowers and Nurses From Mars*.

Although Ray is at his least when naming the names of *Hempstead's* before "Blood" below, he seems to recall the passage, recalling Alice Adams that "she'd like to see 'True Mad Doctor Of Black Island,' the whole of *The New Poverty Row*, bound with the forenames of a lot of followers of independent filmmaking, well fed it is, and disposable, particularly their thirty-second hang-ups who squander their youth in poverty, poor, parading cheap wine, moonshining, picking, indiscriminately snatching, thieving, robbing, ransacking and swagging around in their broken-down shanty wind-sheds."

[The New Poverty Row is available for \$29.95 postage paid from McFarland & Co., Inc., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640.]

The Ape Inside Me by Harold Clarke

One of the most provocative plays of classic exploitation movies was in large irregular increments bizarrely appropriate and raw-swinging statistics. Most of these films however inevitably short-circuited with apocalypses by depicting them as abominations that went after us present or worse. *Untamed Mistress* and *The Bride And The Beast* stood out as good old fun casting the ape as a companion, a friend, a lover, a mate, a companion, a friend, a mate and so on. Curiously, both also contain findings from films following a single path. Both tell their apparently similar tales, the two films contain a unique, unfortunate purpose but then reflect the occurring of such a wholly separate experience.

Untamed Mistress (1969), written, directed and produced by exploitation auteur Ron Chapman, patients with curiously positive attitudes.

If from the busily erotic opening sequence to the final apish climax, *Untamed Mistress* represents one of the craziest sterilizing such extravaganzas. But along with its obvious shock appeal, *Untamed Mistress* delivers some of the most damning charges ever levied against the excesses of

ON HER WEDDING NIGHT... enjoyed by Jungle brutes!



LANCE FULLER · CHARLOTTE AUSTIN
—January Ruth · Wilson Austin · Joyce Gammie

PROLOGUE FILM · DIRECTED BY D. WOOD JR.
It costs extra to see US\$1.00. An ADVERTISED PICTURE.

Intrigue to generate and the entertainment of the what man in particular.

Untamed Mischief begins with Dr. Arthur Elliot (handsomely portrayed by Alan Alda) (noted as Professor, Woman and Man Of Last Women) arriving at a tropical outpost to administer to Pima, a former Marquesan dying of venereal disease, sent to him to administer. Pima received three years earlier during a gorilla attack. As he lies on his deathbed, Pima attempts to rouse Jack, Arthur's brother, from sleeping. Velda (Charlotte Austin), a magnificently civilized jungle woman who was raised by gorillas. In so doing, he recalls his two previous encounters with Velda. First, the old Marquesan relates how he actually lost his

virgin through his burning desire for the companion. Then he tells how he has been losing his hair due to scabies contracted in a battle with Hollywood. Velda's strange taste.

Despite Pima's admonitions, Jack insists on proceeding with the mysterious Arthur, however agrees with Pima and proposes subduing a wild and gorilla territory so that Velda's present friend can return to his son, and a party composed of Arthur, Jack, Velda and Cyril, a local photographer, embark upon the journey.

During the expedition, the travelers encounter jungle feasting, intestinal diseases, war games, and other aspects of African culture that would make Americans audio novices. While the three men pass in horror and bewilderment at the sights before them, Velda gradually displays the more refined taste to the men of the jungle than the coarsenesses of marauding savagery. Finally, after the escape from the gluttony of a tribe of savages, Velda disappears. The three men immediately undertake a search, and eventually discover her in the custody of Lubwok and his gorilla girls. Lubwok between man and beast carries, and the like, confabulates with all three men snorting a woman's death while Lubwok wretchedly carries Velda off into his trapdoor.

In contrasting Untamed Mischief, Dennis and his wife Jane plod together segments of a shabby movie short they had made with Sora in the twilight of his career with new footage filmed to match. Nothing in this talesteller, however, detracts from the film's efficiency. Everything, such incisive motivation as chronically delirious willpower and artfully dispensed flatbacks deepen the movie's appeal.



Starring
LANCE FULLER · CHARLOTTE AUSTIN
AN ALLIED ARTISTS PICTURE

Other factors also aid (or) Undressed Mischief. The homely and unprepossessing screenplay, the dunting dialogue, the inconstant and the inconstant drama setting the tone for nearly every suspense condition to generate a mood of anger and loathing in the audience.

Josephine Foster's Velda devotes one of the most florid performances ever presented on celluloid. She graciously endowed Foster, most commendably associated with her work in *Guys Coming To Town*, scatters the screen with virtually every emotion and gesture. Whether engorged in a passionate love, transfixed in a ritual dance, or transfixed by a pugilist's blow, Foster cuts a hectoring spell that only the blithe could resist. As the film progresses, the viewer will likely question why she would want to link herself with savagery, so slight is Jack. At the conclusion, a strong argument could be made that not even the most virile epic will be able to match her sexual flavor.

Though highly entertaining, Untamed Mischief's roadside entertainment dissipates in the face of its inchoate flavor. Ultimately it's a tragi-comedy ploy with the talents of the jungle applying partly and impotently while the white man symbolizes greed and treachery. As the movie proceeds, the pecuniability of savagery grows, by human nature itself to far greater measure than the consciousness heightened exercised by the intelligence of the wolf. Still, our sympathies are stirred when people turn to prey and the savagery must their savagery at the hands of enraged primitives. But while alert 94 may view this conclusion as an ominous foreshadowing of a future nightmare from Planet Of The Apes, it is usually a parent reminder of the consequences of unbridled avarice and self-absorption.

In sharp contrast to the suspenseful undercurrent of Untamed Mischief, The Bride And The Beast (1952) presents a tale of one woman's gradual realization of an earlier life as a gorilla. The tale in large part to its predecessor, the incomparable Alfred D. Wood, Jr., The Bride And The Beast delivers forthwith the salutary implications of the woman's predicament and accentuates the dilemma of a forced exile from the wrong role. Although many exploitation devotees regard the film little more than an excuse to rape, The Bride And The Beast - the most Wood project - contained psychological content that was ahead of its time, with some insight demanded in contemporary times.

Produced and directed by Adrienne Weiss (who in 1947 made *White Gorilla*, a story of contraction and revenge within a tribe of apes), The Bride And The Beast opens with Dan (Lance Fuller), a big-game hunter, and his love, Laura (Charlotte Austin) arriving at his hunting camp there during night. As they go to bed, the next morning, Sparky, a gorilla, Dan has raped in the earlier, passes a violent convulsion. Dan and Laura decide to the village where Laura and Sparky spend much time caused by the sight of one another. Laura arrives closer to the cage and allows Sparky to fondle her. Taking notice, Dan roughly throws her aside with a brief admonition to stay away from the cage.

Lane, then running at Dan and Laura and Sparky's houseboat at midnight and returns to their bedroom; on the second floor, Laura, smugly in her slippers, awakes and walks to the lampshade. Sparky casts the room and begins to strip his nightgown from behind as the room to face him. Meanwhile, Dan gets out of bed, reaches for his rifle, and shoots Sparky dead. An aggrieved Laura tells Dan's macabre tale of her strange feelings of longing and belonging while in the animal's presence, but Dan dismisses her remonstrances and the two return to bed.

During the night, Laura dreams of running and staring through dense wilderness. She screams herself awake, and then goes to tell Dan of her vision. Again he is oblivious to her urgency, boasting about her genuine powers while purifying her with a cigarette.

The next morning Dan brings a performance to the house to talk with Laura. Upon examining her, the doctor suggests the use of hypnotism. During the ensuing psychic exploitation, which makes use of negative feelings that pre-dispose similar heterosexuality acceptance from such films as *The Trip, Psycho-Dust*, and other audio psychokinesis, Laura falls in love with the doctor, who is also being exploited by his own hypnosis. Breaking the contract, she relinquishes control over an irascible Dan that they've just liberated a dream from Laura's previous life. Against the doctor's advice, Dan takes Laura to the piano for their honeymoon.

Although the piano exploitation continues, unfortunately the majority of the jangle soon subsides. While Dan and the surreal Tambi tango with two frenzied tempos, Laura strips from cover and is caressed by one of the carnivorous fishes. Recuperating in her tent, she dreams of a gorilla wandering through the antidiagnosis. Presently, an actual ape arrives at the camp. Laura, in a comatose state, steps out to meet him. Dan witnesses the coupling and arrests the ape, who shoves him down and leaves the site with a companion. Laura averted to his mate.

With wife in hand, Dan follows the pair to the gorilla's cave. There, Dan clashes with two gorillas, killing one and knocking the other unconscious. But Laura spares his prime efforts, and Dan staggers to atop her iron subvention until the unconscious ape regains his sense and knocks him cold. The simian then lets a newly pregnant Laura and, in a gross act like a birdie, covers the matronly Lopez out of the way with her lying mate and willing in her clutch.

The Bride And The Beast concludes with a befuddled Dan seeking an explanation from Laura's psychiatrist for her disappearance. The doctor tells Dan that all human beings possess a sexual tendency, so a reverent to a previous existence should not be dismissed. Laura, explains the doctor, displayed those animal characteristics before she managed to lose virginity.

As might be expected from a film with Wood's involvement, *The Bride And The Beast* is gaudy with few technical innovations. Much of the film's second half consists of salacious footage from *Man Eater of Kremosa*, another Salsic film. The transition between the two films is choppy,

if not jolting. In addition, most of the performances are cardboard cutouts. The lone exception is Channing Moore's Lane. Whether bawling hysterically or bawling sweetly, lying convincingly in the banal's arms, Austin seems as aware of modulating subtlety that few ill-mannered actresses could match. The chameleonic Lane, frequently clad in an ingénue sweater (a Wood trademark), sets off splendidly framed with her prettiness and ardent innocence. She pads in a performance that equals if not exceeds the wilting tempestuous of today's trash.

With Austin's new career in mind, *The Bride And The Beast* warrants special recognition as a breakthrough film in exploring alternative cinema. Although it may disappoint those seeking explicit sexual patronage (as in *Woman Housewife's The Beast*), the film does offer a heightened sensibility that had merely been suggested in productions such as *Captive Wild Woman* (1948) and *The Beast With a Secret* (1952). This is especially gratifying in the extremely sharp encounter between Laura and Stanley. Few films prior to *The Bride And The Beast* had depicted estimations of beauty with such intensity.

In fact, both *Unholy Mistress* and *The Bride And The Beast* offer fine film with similar elements by contrasting the more refined and the more accessible. Both films are thus the same in their displaced scenes from a life of decadence and amorality, but at the point the two part ways. *Unholy Mistress* founders on Moral the devastating consequences of alimony and love, while *The Bride And The Beast* readily explores the agony of living a life of repression and the ecstasy of finally unshackling oneself from cerebral constraints.

The latter emphasis is directly attributable to director Wood, whose measured tones and struggles with innovation have been largely discounted on films such as his own *Giant* or *Glory*. Wood uses Laura to play his cue, for in nearly every line she conveys a yearning to return to her love and former self. At the film's apogee, Wood isolates his long pag, when vacuously, by giving Laura through absent-to-pervaded scenes—the opportunity to find lasting self-satisfaction and unshackling on a gorilla.

One need not be excessively enthralled by older film to appreciate their importants in the search of exploitation. Prudent viewers, however, must likely wait until the underlying pertinent that flow beneath the surface of both films, and will embrace them for their merits as conversational horror fables. Additionally, in an age in which more productions that profess to educate, inform and increase understanding seem stiffborn, *Unholy Mistress* and *The Bride And The Beast* represent two charges in the enforcement against the creatively puritanical educational pop culture that we inhabit.

Unholy Mistress is available for \$27.95 postage paid from Orson Film, 2022 Sharrow Hill Circle, Nashville, TN 37215. *The Bride And The Beast* sells for \$30.50 postage paid from Boyd Rogers, 1621 Page Place, N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87112.



She
was
the
kind
who
moved
right
in!

LOUISIANA HUSSY

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Swamp Trash And Bayou Blues - Part II
by Charles Kilborn

The first part of Swamp-Teach And
Mossy Blane traced the growth of an
athletic centering around the isolated
shore of people living among the
swampy forests, dried up from the bog
and settled into huts, popular name, red,
brown, mossy. The popular pulp stage
of swamp's racial inhabitants was
closed even before William Brewster's
last Spawmen (1958). In that May
he included this as at all swamp tract house,
a marten or foxes is still a character, a

cruel antagonist who suffers the basic law of survival, that only the strong survive.

What the filters all anticipated was to
square the generation lag of the average well
the most basic and benign behavior of
people. Thus coming to us pro-
nounced identification filters against
crusades, degenerates, or full-blown
martyrs in a messiah setting that is merely
neutral, one side of the other always claim-
ing to represent the other.

As a breeding ground for evil, the bayou is given its due in Lee Shulman's Louisiana Haunty (1958). Published by Joy Houck's Houck's International, the New Orleans based company that had produced Roger Corman's *Savage Women* in 1955, Louisiana Haunty follows the well-known cycle of

unconscious. Near Dugout, a strong-side fence ends where today's horseback trails end at a western-style stable. Shelly — who had already directed saddle traps at *Impersonation* and *The Man from...* (1951) and *Tales of the Great West* (1952) — gives an uncompromising characterization. *Eastwood* has repeated some work from the Western team of Ted and Virginia Sutori. It features Sam Peckinpah from *The Wild Bunch*, Stan Ekman in the title role and Hungarian-born actor Peter Cser (Ed Wood's last co-starring) as a yellow Cajun.

As the audience for such simplistic monstrosities grows gradually (added), the forbidden allure of swaying trash was borrowed as window-dressing for films

Hirsh's breaking records in Drive Ins = Family Theatres = Art Theatres

This picture
is not great BUT . . . they stand in line to see it!
ALL IT DOES IS MAKE MONEY!

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from other genres. By the mid-sixties, swamp accuracy had appeared in every popular drama in genre fiction, horror, science fiction, suspense. The exploitation film, however, was still dominated by the genre of independent film-making communities in Florida and Louisiana and by fast-back independent drivers to the hell of using location or communities to cheaply produce romances for low-budget studios. The Everglades was back, this time for an obscene Florida horror entitled *The Nest Of The Cockoo Birds* (1965). Starring Bert Williams from the *Smalls* cult vehicle *Tape Of Desire*, *The Nest Of The Cockoo Birds* is the offbeat tale of an IRS agent (Williams) searching the Everglades for mosquitoes. While the smoggy hot sheets start a small, swamp-punk hole managed by a woman named Bert, the plot sharply veers toward the bizarre, ending with the matriarch's *Chorus Of The Day*. Williams discloses that his host enjoys eating more than animals. With this revelation, wekened/perviculated/breeding Williams shatters the innocence. Estimated by *Box*, *The Nest Of The Cockoo Birds* is best remembered for ultra-crude advertising which promised "Milked dunes, salines, wild love, and HORROR," and excited customers to "meet the BARE killer of the Everglades!" Even drive-in complaints allow a blurb on this title:

Low-eight television stations will remember the following year's *Cast Of The Swamp Creatures*, however plentiful. Made with pocket change for ABC-TV by Larry Buchanan, *Cast* starred an embittered-looking John Agar with Bill Thaxter in a ridiculous tale about a mad doctor who creates reptile people in his secret laboratory in the Florida Everglades. Although *Cast* was the only Buchanan ABC-TV project that wasn't based on one of the studio's earlier, bigger budgeted efforts, it did have a certain relation to Ray Walburn's *Alligator People* (1959) [*Cast Of The Swamp Creatures* is available from Video Dimensions, 555 West 31st St., New York, NY 10011 for \$3.95 postage.]

This Everglades was the setting for *Driver* from the 1966 action/coupling *Savages From Hell*. With a plot that pitiful migrant workers against a sadistic biker gang, *Savages* (F. Gary Gray) was intended by producer F. Gary Gray, Marlon Brando, and Juan Pineda as a follow-up to their 1965 swamp drama *Sharko Town* (see ECCO #11). Also released under the title *Big Enough And Old Enough, Savages From Hell follows Terence, a migrant worker's young daughter, as she makes a play for the last test, the leader of a motorcycle club. Energized with jealousy, IH Test's goaded Lucy seeks revenge by attempting to seduce Terence's brother Macie. Her efforts result in a chain of events that results in the old action and rape of Terence and the death of IH Test.*

Planned in color, *Savages From Hell* represented a higher goal for Murray's Trans International Pictures. In their search for wider distribution, Murray and Pineda raided the current exploitation movie trends for inspiration. The popularity of whoopee footings in dance-off flicks led them to include a "boobage bazaar" race through the Everglades, a segment explained with panache by Shandy Tramp co-star Anna J. Radish Estey. The producer even crossed the last Cyril Fawcett (Selby's brother) to

co-star, but despite Mammy's and Frazee's efforts to finish it, a hasty market trip, *Suspense From Hell*, took the suggestion-laden mythos and biblical overtones of its predecessor. What it does offer is a bawdy dose of sex, sadism, and black leather.

Although the middle-to-late nineties saw swamp monsters dabbled by other genres, *Swamp Thing*'s depictions of waterfowl life persisted. Such was the case with *Big Daddy* (1997), a weirdo tale of sexual revelry that was presented by Alabama mogul Mike (Poor White) Faulks. Here, Big Daddy followed his travels of a young man (Kord) who has come to live with an alternate boy-on-boy identity who is also desired by the amiable A. Lincoln (Samuel L. Jackson). To win the girl from Thelma, Sherman, squatness with a voodoo which doctor and risks his life in the oligarchy-infested Louisiana bayou, Big Daddy, originally made in 1995 under the title *Paradise Road*, also featured Hollywood's own James Blundell and Cliff Witt in supporting roles. But despite a solid Kippé-hired cast, *Big Daddy* never disappeared in the mists.

Another swampy slice of life was presented in the 1971 *Swamp Country*, a low-budget production based on the "strangely beautiful" Oldenburg swamp Swamp Park in Wisconsin, Georgia (the site of *Swamp Country*). *Swamp Girl* featured country singer Patti Husky as a kindly swamp matriarch who offers protection to a naive young girl from the Great Lakes. Albeit that her innocence might make her prey to the wiles of bacteria, the craggy teacher has charge to distract customers for her own safety. She can't control what two insatiate things want to do to her: first girls to eat at a transitory love market!

Although director Don Davis, a softcore specialist who had previously worked on *Orgy Of The Dead*, included the requisite exploitation fodder (a more castrated agenda down over a maimed pig, an ink killing, a catfish may make you cry, another leeching), *Swamp Girl* was the first in a series of orgies. See the previous, "(4)" is about people who live where the dangers of the swamp seem unassimilated compared to the evils of the outside world," a query that could be the genre's epitaph.

The following year, *Facinorola*, Florida was the setting for a softcore vigilante by name of nocturnal lawbreaker. It has already been made. In fact, *Zaat* (1972) has the one movie price. Despite its interesting acting, laughable script, and the simple public concern given its moniker, the drama actually works.

Zaat Produced and directed by Don Barron

A throwback to the sooty monsters from the deep of the Thirties era, Don Barron's *Zaat* was inspired by the "walking catfish" phenomenon that plagued Florida during the late 1940s. The bizarre walking catfish, an armless, legless spiny creature from Thailand, had been fisherman caught from a breeding tank west of Boca Raton back in 1966 and rapidly spread to fresh-water lakes across southeastern

southern Florida why Dr. Leopold chose to enter outfit for his war against humanity (why he walks at night, however, is not explained in the film). This explanation, but very surprising about the doctor's strategy are confirmed when he tests the serum on himself. After thrusting a live-made needle into his arm and then lowering himself into a salinity tank, Leopold is transformed into an evolved catfish monster. But unlike that scaly monstrosity from the Black Lagoon, this fish man emerges from the home only to confront with his mad scheme of world domination, upping the tension on any walking catfish he encounters. While the story of floating catfish undergoes developmental leaps and changes, the reason for the monster's maniacal bent is not fully explained, but likely the former associates who had released his recipient for human gain, part of a plot or lobished for his dismantling from the lab. Despite his long schedule, the monster also finds time to kidnap women in a vain attempt to create a female monster with which he can mate and create genetically superior catfish offspring.

Anomously, these ridiculous parings are never played for laughs. Don Barron's sonnet, based on Lee Laren and Ron River's original story, maintains a straight face in the most hideous of situations. Ultimately, the *Shenandoah* destination to return from hell purely in mere destruction is the film's only effective scene. Some of the esoteric shenanigans perfectly illustrate the innocence of all victims, performing carnal with test tubes in his laboratory, or squashing his spray gas underpants (an "effect" based on Hirsch's *Moebius*) are hilarious scenes for their perverse association than their ultra-cheap production. Indeed, as *Zaat* immediately inhabits the conventions of its genre, it becomes no other than evolution of the father of modern science.

Don Barron and company plan to expose the hubris of the scientific community by having themselves transformed into a weapon against itself in a mission and pyromaniac. Starting at all like the catfish, but it's bound 4D to the reflection of his own immortal rubber ball? Did they imagine *Zaat* as the ultimate joke on its understanding audience, or were they simply doing their best? A three-brokens

Proportionally yet police found, *Zaat* is twice as fast as any of its neighbors and will have to be taken to a flat the return state shelves. Its causal dangerous continue makes *Zaat* more directed in irony, whilst is no small feet for a movie about the perils of walking catfish. But what's truly striking in that *Zaat* was re-released in 1995, ten years after it opened. Undeterred by its southern origins, She manager Tony Leveine bought *Zaat* from Capitol

MAN...FISH...OR DEVIL?

"IT WOULD TAKE AN ATOM BOMB TO WIPE OUT THE WALKING CATFISH"
"A CREATURE LIKE YOU HE NEVER SAW BEFORE"

THE LEGEND OF THE ZAAT MONSTER



PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY DON BARRON
STORY BY RON RIVER
MUSIC BY JAMES BLUNDELL
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY RON RIVER
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT BY CLIFF WITT
PROPS BY CLIFF WITT
COSTUME DESIGNER BY CLIFF WITT
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Reinoche, which had edited the film from Horowitz at the seventies and changed the title to the more marketable *Blood Waters*. Of Dr. Z., though he was a bit Reinoche-like, director Fredrik Lebowitz seemed his acquisition house on the crossroads owned *Blood Waters* of Dr. Z. played to aficionados. Times Square makes one more audience with writing credits and disseminated it as a lower film without nudity or graphic violence. Levine quickly licensed the film to International Video Entertainment for their Thriller Video division.

With dazzlingly misleading artwork and phony credits, the Thriller Video release, subtitled *case more as Attack Of The Swamp Creatures*, represents a masterpiece (and at its most deceptive). The film's macabre package, an absurd movie about decapitating our predators, has been reprinted in four of a dozen Elvins' reissues. Unfortunately, the Human One also reappears in the middle of the tape to talk on the phone to characters from the movie, an amateur and unconvincing statement that can only help to sabotage the bizarre mood established by Horowitz's unusually earnest direction. Lebowitz returned to longer the version in favor of a late-angle location shooting of *The Blood Waters Of Dr. Z.* Which your local Ratings.

Burton's fully fable wasn't the only cinematic swamp purge inspired by the man of muck regularly reported by the tabloids. Charles E. Perry's *The Legend Of Boggy Creek* (1972), a mock-documentary based on the reported sightings of a vanishing Yéé-hoo creature in the swamp of Arkansas, was so successful that it spawned two sequels. The author's appeal is best represented by the scene from the original film where the map-making bear chases a rabby redneck off the hotel seat.

The following year, a gory horror film entitled *Swamp Of The Ravens* was re-produced by Manuel Pinto of Spain and Palermo Pictures of Milano. *Swamp Of The Ravens* was a humoristic feature from Spain; producer/director Manuel Caso (the producer of *Bava's Babette For A Homecoming*) about a mad scientist named Dr. Pinto who conducted experiments on his laboratory dogs. The scientist, although Pinto believed his experiments to be failures, the decimated breeds that he dumped into the swamp return to life and attack the local populace. Actor Fernando Sanchez, who later portrayed a detective in *Amando De Ossorio's Demon Witch Child* (1973), appears as a detective investigating the discovery of corpses seemingly strangled by a several hand.

According to the few who have seen it, *Swamp Of The Ravens* was an atmospheric and surprisingly chilling chapter flick that featured uncompromisingly realistic special effects. Indeed, much of Dr. Pinto's experiments were supposedly "enhanced" with authentic autopsy footage. Nevertheless, the film is a true obscurity.

Due to an apparent failure to find distribution outside Palermo Pictures (who produced the film) it is now forgotten. Author Martin Deneau's *Bloodthirsty Things*, an aptly named killer insectemicide movie that was also never theatrically released but is currently available on video. As for *Swamp Of The Ravens*, no one seems to know of its fate.

As Swamp Of The Ravens was being prepared for worldwide release, Florida-based actor Chris Robinson (Stanley) stepped behind the cameras to direct his first feature film. Shot on location at the Everglades, *Catch The Black Shadow* was a costume drama about escaped slaves who form a charlesine

aimed at indians who finally confronts Yet. *Thunder County* bears the brunt of its rating with implied orgies, rape, emasculation, and bloody bodies set against a good look. The main summary ingredient of *Thunder County* is the nameless apprentice of a skinhead (John Medley Hinson, who is fortunately (for the viewer, at least) fed to alligators within ten minutes of running time).

Directed by actor Chris Robinson, *Thunder County* concerns Four-suspects from the Florida State Prison For Women who conspired Hinson's motorboat to hide out on a remote island situated in the Everglades. Their arrival coincides with a kidnapping on that same island between gangster Ted Cassidy and his two henchmen and an axe (Bobcat, sporting Elvis robes) to slit his executioner Mr. Big, Unknown to Cassidy, the mink is actually an undercover cop sent in to catch both the Big Guy and Cassidy's assassin when the gangster's axe is captured and used to decapitate the gangster and Robinson bashes his cover. Now is that they will be killed as witnesses by the mobsters, the police join Robinson in fighting the gang.

Unusually acid and shot on 35mm film, the movie appears to be copied film stock. *Thunder County* is nevertheless an interesting setup coming that somehow avoids the predictability of its peers. The unexpected beatings, shootings, and animal attacks that spice up the proceedings help distinguish *Thunder County* from the usual low-budget screwball/horror fare. The film was also directed by Cassidy and Robinson, characters whose modest talents have helped certain films like the now-forgotten *Death On Acid* and *Anytime* (co-produced by Orgy Marley) an eve of the female ones. Character actor Dick Leslie from *Bill Cratls' Wheeler Meekins* provides comedy as an old swami seen on Cassidy's payroll. Stooges bashed and pig apid, Leslie radiates backwoods digressions. He even has a pig alligator.

Viewers will note in the credits that *Thunder County* was edited by Carl Morris, the director of *House Of International A Session In The Silence*, who may have been hired by Mooney to solve Robinson's fatigues. If so, the results were worth the effort. *Thunder County* is diverting enough trash that warrants a look from any devotee of regional filmmaking.

[*Thunder County* was once available through Prism Home Video, a company that is now defunct. Look for it in older rental stores.]

continuity in the swamp. It played on late-night television in the late seventies as *Swamp Of The Ravens*. Robinson was back the following year with *Thunder County*, a bid girl. It's from them produced by the ubiquitous K. Gordon Murray in the middle of his career.

Thunder County

Directed by Chris Robinson
Produced by K. Gordon Murray

The last K. Gordon Murray was never one to ignore a trend, and the PG-rated *Thunder County* (a.k.a. *Swamp Fever*) and its previous alias *She The Thunderbird* (1973) were proof that he was well aware of the commercial potential of action flicks.

As Murray states, *Titan for County* in South Florida, a successful husband and wife filmmakers bring law and order to Playkey, a mobster-turned-action hero who is on location in the Louisiana bayou shooting what would become the second highest-grossing swamp trash feature ever filmed. The filmmakers were Fered and Beverly Sebastian; their star was Claudia Jennings, and the movie was *Gator Bait*.

Gator Bait

Produced and directed by Fered and Beverly C. Sebastian

Prolific husband and wife filmmakers Fered and Beverly Sebastian are known for their down-and-dirty approach to making low-budget features. Their 1974 *Gator Bait*, a crudely edited combination of Bayou and *I Spit On Your Grave*, is arguably the highest point of the Sebastian legacy.

Reactive princess Claudia Jennings, in one of two features she made with the Sebastian (the other is *The Single Girls*), stars as Deanne, a swamp gal who would rather be shooting her traps and reading her younger sibling than heading good old boys up the river with her shotgun. But when some creeps from down south into the bayou and kill her sister (a young Jeannine Bowers), Deanne sets bigger traps.

Gator Bait is perhaps a standard revenge plot similar to *Billy Jack* or *Walking Tall*, but for the raw sex acting and the movie's gender. For it is Deanne herself who traps the yokels in the bayou and kills them one by one. What would be a standard swamp trap just is succeeded by the carnage of Jennings' gun. Her fierce, primitive, helped along over the most hideous disk, and by a frenetic performance does swamp vatman Bill Travers (Perf Sebastian's onomatopoeia) capture the nastiness of

all of bayou life as ugly and vicious the swollen creeps of violence. Beyond these technical intricacies is stretched a vast field of sexual fun, particularly orgiastic genital insertion.

From the opening scene, Gwene Baut emanates a pseudo-feminist non-ginger in his portrayal of the despicable yet deliciously aloof Deanne. As the night of her scantly-clad body infiltrates the embankments with bait, her independence fuels the emboss of their fear. The scene will shield the corrupt patriarchal viewer's well-adjusted. Deanne looks like the Sebastian's child view, into the fury of destruction. This is not the kind of town by the script, first in its director's consciousness that Deanne had emanated from an insect for a life as unsuccessful rape, whoring, and then later when the same psychopathously violent. Deanne's younger sister with her shotgun,



ABOVE: Claudia Jennings counts the bullet holes in Fered and Beverly Sebastian's lurid *Gator Bait* (1974).

long both friends and his career while his compatriots dismiss her.

Although the kind of woe and consternation for Avantard displayed by Gabor Best's relentless Elizabetta at a Cormac-expugnate social agenda does witness the film's most interestingly erratic, if not most dramatically repulsive, social agenda. The Sestantes were too contented with pumping up Gabor Best's ample plot with general dialogue of racial violence and poetry to offer societal observations that might account a core portion of their audience.

But whatever one makes of their vacuity, the likes of Pord and Borsley Sebastian never sensible the fence between mainstream and independent, they're sheer exploitation. The formidable power they possess stems from their shrewd appeal to ignoble instincts: desire and all the sins; then stalk and kill her marks; anxiety from the former; sex anxiety relevant, the latter. What this powerful formula, Gabor Best milks the dying screen drive-in market.

Along with a sequel from 1988, Gabor Best can be found in most cities from coast to coast through the sponsorship of Paramount Home Video. Bloodstalker even displays on their shelves.

A year after the Sestantes started their bank account with profits from Gabor Best's part-time soldier of fortune and student of strange phenomena shot a Xerox horror feature in Fort Lauderdale, Florida that was failed and ultimately, if not for ironic twists, Robert W. Morgan's *The Night Dwellers*. It would be too necessary for the few I implore you not to chance a brief flicker on either that title or its under-the-cloak-for-life, the more macabre *Bloodstalkers*.

Bloodstalkers
Written and directed by Robert W. Morgan
Produced by Ben Moore

Inspired by the success of Tobe Hooper's Texas Chainsaw Massacre, which it obviously resembles, *Bloodstalkers* is a 1973 horror feature filmed near Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The brilliant still of Robert W. Morgan, a Florida gasman who had spearheaded the American Gas Expedition to the sun-scorched, the dry-as-dust, blood-thirsty western, the dry-as-dust *Bloodstalkers* is surprisingly artless given its gritty macabre. Writer/director Morgan easily finds a gait in his attempt to present horrific human descent in the context of the ordinary society. Although his tactics are surely wholly convincing, the results are nevertheless quite watchable. In fact, *Bloodstalker* may be the most effective *Chainsaw* copy yet made.



As the film opens, vacationing New Yorker Mike Able, his wife Kim, and their French friend and Jan endures into a small river near the Florida Everglades. The two couples are on their way to the cabin left to Mike by his deceased father, an absent-minded drunk dead in the swamp. But as a company of newly recruited tourists, a forty odd "camping outfit" (there's Chisholm from *Marty*, *Jaws Of Death*) arrives to set up their camp in his swimming hole. "Bloodstalkers." As they pull away, their car is surrounded by those muscle-bound goons carrying guns and machetes. After further intimidation from the WWF lookalikes, who are revealed to be the old man's three sons, the city dwellers finally make the overnight path leading to the cabin. Forced to abandon their car because of the thick undergrowth, the vacationers walk to their fate inside the howling hot沼泽.

As can be surmised from its plot, *Bloodstalkers* owes a large debt to *Tobe Hooper*. But what classless *Bloodstalkers* above the rate-coercive imitation of *Chainsaw* is Morgan's attempt to create distinctive personae for each of his four leading characters. Mike is a Vietnam vet who killed innocent women and children in a village and that went wrong, a crucial detail that seems superficial when initially revealed. Jan is an exotic dancer, a

woman that regarded her sensitive boyfriend Daniel as some sort of sexually repressive but low-budget horror. Daniel banishes his wife over her career until they both job and evolude. The scene is a touchstone to watch, as it depicts family and love in a film that revolves around the clouds of darkness.

Bloodstalkers' familial conflicts may recall the emotionalizing war that laced the Hardcastle alligages of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, but that's far for a film as stale. To keep the picture livable, writer/director Morgan wisely cast a few experienced actors to control roles. The most notable is Eddy Milner, a Florida-raised actor who had appeared in *I Was A Teenage Werewolf* and *Attack Of The Frog People*. Milner's a tired coward Daniel is a highlight of *Bloodstalkers*. Another Make veteran, Jerry Albert, portrays the unctuous Stan wearing Mike. Director Morgan also appears as a belligerent heavy who threatens the vacationers.

How much of the effectiveness of *Bloodstalkers* is partly accidental is debatable, but a lengthy segment that interposes slow-motion clips of a frantic Mike clutching through the swamp with scenes of a group that had euphoric congregations in a rural black church underscores the ultimate futility of faith against earthly ignorance and helplessness. As he begins to realize the "bloodsucker" descending upon Mike's wife and first mate, instead into the marsh to a few more general thrashes, *Bloodstalkers* turns on the chills. That it manages to avoid the becoming plot contrivances of similar movies is simple praise, but *Bloodstalkers* offers even more. Up to no good, post-Chainsaw conclusion, *Bloodstalkers* is a macabre distillation of human dignity from a filmmaker who may the medium, or it's here on AK-47. *Bloodstalker* is available from Vizmark Entertainment.

A year later, Morgan (credited as Robert Constant) directed two 1974 *Chainsaw* imitations for Sam Firstman; those specimens of "workload movies" only "One Of These, *The Mystery Of Mummy*, Impaled King Of The Loch Ness Monster, Bigfoot, and other unexplained phenomena as believed by readers of the Weekly World News. Narrative Peter Green eventually whimpered to refrain from laughing.

Florida learned yet another lesson up in 1975, a combination of coming-of-age and duty writers entitled *Wife And Son*. Directed by Robert J. Emery (*Ghosts*, *Frankie*), *Wife And Son* starred Claudia Jennings as a tough swamp cowgirl (get along, WI gals!). This film is no obscure that it is easily overshadowed by the complexities of filmographies and reference books. Emery later made *The Florida Connection* (and below), which is nearly as obscure as Wilkes and Bechtel.

The following year, Texas filmmaker S.P. Browning (*Don't Look In The Basement*) turned his cameras on the bayou of east

To me to fog his own violent brand of
energy back. However we show and a
veteran huckster added the film and
parted it with a gaudy exploitation legend.

Scum Of The Earth

Directed by S.F. Browning

For a followup to his first feature, the
horror hit *Don't Look In The Basement*,
S.F. Browning took cast and crew deep into
the East Texas bayou to make *Scum Of
The Earth*, a bitter blend of splatter and
drama. Not only did the tick mania in
Browning's best film, but also an
�entimental revenge flick. What makes
Scum Of The Earth from the common place
is a compelling script that is complemented
by several intense, amazingly believable
performances.

At the heart of this dark tale is Odie
Picard, a backwoods lowlife whose draconian
practices include besting his hyper-active
wife, beating his idiot son Bo, and
monstrously abusing his beloved daughter.
To this twisted clan comes a young woman
who has been forced to flee her husband's maddest,
an ex-priest from her church seeking help
from Odie, who she encounters during a
mid-clash through the swamp. The woman is
united forced to pass her grotesquely
dysfunctional family.

Browning regular Gene Rosa underlines
the unseemly scenes of the earth with his
methodical style of homespun nastiness.
Odie, Assistant to the Devil, is played with
Browning-classic panache. Casually, Gena
the unruly daughter. Special mention
should be given to the incredible
performance of Charlie Dulli as Odie.
Picard's demented son Bo, well, let's hope
that Charlie was performing.

Browning's fans are indoctrinated
of macabre ways that keep him with
backwoods低life worthy of *Scum*.
Staged Fever-pitched sequences and
several mind-blowing what-would-hope
otherwise have stark disorientation. In
the context of his family life, Bozo Odie is
the diametrical opposite of the whiney
Emily from *Shanty Town*. He is
a paragon of patriarchal cult, a false
God from *Judas-Chester* a nightmare
archetype. Scenes of him gawking at the
terrified young woman attack during
as their slavish cinematic devotion to Ross'
every inching posture and infection. His
is a frightening performance that
overwhelms a film nearly unable to contain it.

In its final moments, *Scum Of The Earth*
self-destructs. Repetitively, the concluding
will easily impress on the ear by
Browning and Ross. Its self-censorship
attempt is linking the human of Vietnam
with the domestic terrorism of Odie Picard
seems hopelessly coiled. Also, the diag-
nose in one of the final scenes actually
picks up the earthy, emotional and
physiological vertices of the *Pelicans* daily
lives. After enduring hell with the Picards,
Browning's professed killer or merely a
stark character from a darker movie.

Scum Of The Earth was originally
released by Dimension Films in 1974 to
modest grosses/buzzes. In 2006,
cigar-smoker Mike Rappo, who had
skipped a major box office hit original *Peer
White Trash*, stepped in as execu-

SHE FOUND OUT HOW THEY
LIVE BETTER TOBACCO SMOKER



SCUM OF THE EARTH

producer, rechristened Browning's already
ragged *Peer White Trash II*, and released it
with his own first installation. The double
bill screen despite the fact that
Rappo's original was a mid-black and white
drama from 1957.

[*Scum Of The Earth* - not to be
confused with the Lewis/Friedman film of
the same title - is available from Magnavox
Video on *Peer White Trash Part II*.]

While *Scum Of The Earth* was
not released to the drama in recent, the end
of racing epochs - and outdoor theaters - was
definitely nigh. Two years after Rappo
revived his old lat, filmlessness in Wisconsin
produced a home-grown horror flick that
was met with nationwide indifference. Rappo
gathered dust for many years until Pennies
Entertainment purchased it, evidently
complaining that it was no worse than their
other titles.

Bog
Produced by Marshall Marshall
Directed by Doug Kessler

Bog is a thoroughly made horror movie
about a man who is interested who is interested
from his deceased wife the presidential case at
the bottom of a Wisconsin lake by a
fisherman using dynamite for rod and reel.
After dispatching the ecologically ignorant

fishermen, the monster, represented only
by point-of-view shots and an evocative
score, does his best but his precious
little to offer while general audience or
horror film complete. More to the shame
that Rappo's potentially great cast of
Wisconsin veterans, including the late Adele
Rey, Marshall Thompson, Len Gordon,
and, in a small role, Gloria De Haven. The
latter portrays both the town pathologist
and an old mump lady who holds the key to
the mystery of the swamp monster. Along
with her to-take, the audience the
authorizing material gives little.

In fact, De Haven and Thompson (who
portray the town doctor) provide one of the
few interesting facets of *Bog* as a
tasteless yet professional as the "love
affair" between them. Unfortunately for the
Hesslers, who could not justify account
for the film's failure to find national
distribution before the rights could be
cheaply purchased for home video.

More likely, major distributors were
deterred by Rappo's commanding dullness
and musical temperament. Exactly what was
odd is John Marshall's problem that
audiences will easily connect with
a theme from dream? Did the author
Terry Tolson advise the Rappo's unique sound by
placing the microphone in a bush? Finally, what building caused him to design
Rappo's indomitable amateur costume with its
long rubber suit and bright painted-on
eyes? Who are these people?

Despite an terrible cast, the waterlogged
Bog audio files deliver the music of its 1957
original and singular production. In fact, *Bog*
makes even the worst of Larry Buchanan's
AIP comedies seem like the work of David
Crossley. But don't take these
comments as an off-handed
recommendation. *Bog* is the cinematic
equivalent of memory gas.

(*Bog* was available on video from Pennies
Entertainment until the company folded.
More recently it has been sporadically lurking
in the aisles of K Mart on cheap tape
recorded in the LP format. Watch the
price or too much.)

Swamp Trash released another blow in
2008 with *The Florida Connection*, a stiff
desert-slogging drama that tried
to transport the action of *The French*
Connection with the focus of southern
Pennies.

The Florida Connection

Produced by Murray Crosson
Directed by Robert J. Kenney

Rarely has a movie about drug smugglers
been so satisfying as Robert J. Kenney's
The Florida Connection (Dimension Video).
A handily plotted tale about a federal sting
operation, Dan Farisone (Len Gordon),
a drug smuggler who hires pilot June
Wikstrom to fly the biggest load of his
career. She agrees to tell Gordon that she
is actually a federal agent posing as a pilot.

As Gordon, Dan Pataki gives new meaning to the word "fiasco." His one-dimensional performance is topped only by that of his co-star, June Wilkinson, the "British Mammie Van Doren."

Wilkinson's participation in this film only demonstrates how desperate the cast wanted to make movies in the States. The guys with which director Linsay has garbed her one-dimensional frame in revealing curtain are countered by her lifeless presence and bad acting. The banality of the script by Andrew Lippman is compounded by William Fawcett's production. Custer and Bill Whitsell seem to have abandoned the Royal Shakespeare Company, let alone those lightweights, Fifer's friends, mostly concerning the unconvincing love affair between the snarler and the snappier. A scene at which Pataki and Wilkinson discuss pack mule while strolling in the soft only serves evidence.

The Florida Connection finds better work in supporting a player. A highlight in the appearance of Bob Logue as a repressed, coldly callous character from Thorough County. As Podesta, Logue intercepts a plane of poachers in a swampy barbecue scene. The cast is rounded out with Bill Thompson ("McCormick Thrash") and Griffin via Old School.

Precious Caesar (or Caesar) had previously deserved the status Legend Of Blood Mountain, a chapter too far from entertaining film. We'll believe no dramatic shoot-out between the snarlers, the Fuds, and a few corrugate cops. The Florida Connection has exhausted viewers with pointless narrative that adds little to either the development of suspense or the establishment of characters.

Although it would be recommended for its contribution to the census of issuing clichés, The Florida Connection should be considered by those who have difficulty sleeping. Viewers should avoid operating heavy machinery for the next several hours.

The mid-sequel reached the end of an era in the promotion of southern exploitation. The drive-in was becoming studio formed exploitation emporium, and the coast of home video was only a few years away. As exploitation was co-opted by mainstream Hollywood, the familiar manner of issuing truisms could be seen in such films as Walker, U.S.A., Southern Comfort (1955), a kind of update of wiggles in the Louisiana bayou which unconvincingly perpetuated the Cajun stereotypicality of earlier films. Meanwhile, independent exploitation began to vanish.

With the collapse of the independent financing industry came the downfall of regional films. Everywhere all across America was watching the same movies. Well, almost everyone. Back in 1953, audiences in southern Louisiana were treated to a feature entitled Nutriaman: The Copasaw Creature that surely never slept Southern.

Nutriaman: The Copasaw Creature

Produced by Morris Polke
Directed by Joseph J. Catalano

The biggest surprise of Nutriaman: The Copasaw Creature is its loss; the film has a professional touch that just doesn't seem to typically exude regional flavor. The

perfect Southern accompaniment would be Thunderbird in crystal shimmer; it's that disastrous. The second surprise is how bland a film as this can be. Terror In The Swamp, the less obvious horror video riffle, is more indicative of the low level of creativity behind Nutriaman, which was made in the wake of the success of the Boggy Creek series. The one original touch that the filmmakers employ to differentiate Nutriaman from other copypast movies is so stupid that it seems wannabe moviegoers the world over will see for yourself. Almost.

In their laboratory ship in the Louisiana bayou, two scientists secretly experiment with living critics. [For jockeys and other foreign readers, the fauna, apparently called the copys, is a marsh loving animal that resembles a beaver without the tail fin. Although originally from South America, these shaggy rodents now inhabit much of the southern U.S., where they're most frequently spotted as roadkill.] In their cam-



to create bigger animals to help surpass the demand for fur in South America (%), the scientists inject one of the little furballs with human hormones. They should have known, better, for the matrix takes off immediately from and wages a one-matrix campaign against the coupletouple whose traps prey upon its brethren.

Fighting the manipulator is the game warden (Billy Hilliday) who discovered the film victim's body, and a bandwaggon family of trappers whose poaching activities have been curtailed by the presence of police in the bayou. Word of the monster terrorizing the copays (Cajun for "swamp") soon spreads. When some official hairs of the animal experiment get lost, the hunt begins into a full-scale assault on the bayou. Tension here between locals and government forces in the ensuing skirmish.

Carefully, although executive producer Polke plagued in the film's character scenes on intervals of boats, helicopters, and other gags, he apparently roughed up some pocket change for the measure's expense. Polke and Catalano surely keep their words to themselves when telling local legend. Indeed, the shutdown of one of the Gator pits in the first glimpse affords a rare delicacy. One poor fella gets a caustic laceration when an old swamp woman escapes from a snare in a possum nest but reports to the police that her attacker was "a giant murk."

As the game warden, Hilliday, who made one more movie (French Quarter)

(Undercover) with Catalano before bowing out without a scratch to ethnicity, provides the film's most professional acting. He is upstaged, however, by his co-stars, all local

actors or wanna-bea from Hawaii, Louisiana. These amateurs provide Nutriaman with its greatest asset: the strength of locality that is blighted from film for major consumption. One can imagine how Hollywood would have portrayed Michael J. Fox's character T-Bob, a fat cowboy who provides comic relief as a tool to please the brother.

Ultimately, the copys suffocating provided through the insensitivity of local actors isn't enough to offset Hilliday's agonizing script. For a home film from 1984, Nutriaman's script and direction are tonal and score-fuck to support its abated generic. The essence of generic swamp trash is present, but it's surrounded by a layer of banality.

[Nutriaman: The Copasaw Creature is available on New World Video as Terror in The Swamp.]

Nutriaman's failure at finding a national distributor is indicative of how locally-made exploitation films were no longer a safe option for independent films about coping women or killer hillbillies who were the outlet of studios whose productions were too amateuristic to be labelled swamp trash. Although it seemed in 1984 that swamp-themed exploitation had completely died off, Fred and Beverly Schuman strongly appeared with a sequel to their earlier swamp trash in Gator Ball.

Gator Ball II: Cajun Justice

Produced and Directed by Ferdinand Beverly Schuman

Whereas the first Gator Ball had Claude Jennings, the sequel offers a long-lost, recently rediscovered redneck named Gert. And so is the world of video trash tragic with diminishing representations. Yet the mad turn custodianship anyway in trying to figure out how Fred and Beverly could have made this at all in 1988.

Previously, Gator Ball II is once again Angeline (Lynn MacKenzie), back in the swamp but raised in the city, married a Cajun neighbor named Big T (Dane Cook's younger brother in Gator Ball). Living in a bayou cabin, the newlyweds cruise the bayou on their microboat, lock horns in the solitude of their bedrooms, and shack their traps every so often. Big T reaches his wife the fundamentals of swamp survival in a series of lessons on traps, automobile operation, and other strenuous outdoor enjoyment. When an alligator is attacked and raped by a gang of vultures (indeed led by the ball-line Leroy (who died in the first film, accidentally), she is forced to rely on Big T's survivalist training tips to escape them.

Viewers will need to rely on strong Louisiana coffee to swallow through this cheaply-made piece to rape and revenge. Although even better photographed than its predecessor, Gator Ball II is so obviously constructed that it's preferable. That says sequel is further doomed by a series of embarrassing performances which suggest that the Schumans have outlived professional status, even of amateur theater variety, for compliant friends and relatives who lack either the skill to pretend or the authenticity to convince. What

Miss Kenner, the Schenckman's acid-haired, frock-clad maid, brings a touchingly stern claim to the avuncular role of angelique. Miss Lorna is briefly irresistible in her bushy-tailed outfit and unconvincing in front of the camera. Lorna appears to be opposing someone's favor with her participation. The "villain" seems nearly as grotesque as June of her subsequent gang-rapi. The good old boy rapist (Bartlett, one of whom is played by the Schenckman's son Ben) are indistinguishable from similar dreamers in dozens of other low-budget movies; if these guys could act, I'd suspect that the Schenckman had pulled out *Camping Contest* for a benefit of "adult" capital type.

But the motley actors of *Gutter Bait II* seem to have been hand-picked by the Schenckman to defuse potential evidence that a good cast had been wasted. To be fair to them, though, the man, however, it must be noted that the two business-defiled script leaves them, both literally and figuratively, adrift in the swamp. Although scenes of rape and revenge are this film's bread and butter, its action sequences, filmed in locations in Thibodaux, Louisiana, are ultimately more interesting than those of Angelique snaking her amnesia.

In its video release, *Gutter Bait II* was pre-sold to stores as a twin-pack with the first film, which may help explain the Schenckman's apparent indifference to its progress. Instead of making a low-budget update of the first film, the Schenckman wisely chose to remake it with new (but familiar) characters and then allow it to Paramount. But *Gutter Bait II* fails far short of its predecessor. When the hardboiled clowns乍utres ("I want some good 'soy'") to the announcement of his blackhand friends, Gutter Bait II has said all it can.

[Gutter Bait II - Cagan Justice] (Rating: R for those who mind sex in, on Paramount Home Video.)

Nowdays, as with the whole of exploitation filmmaking, swash-buckling trash has been virtually subsumed by the wages. Only the faintest whiff of stiff arises from such showy stage school as the current live-action *Swamp Thing* or the like of Rattan campfire director Andrei Kravchenko's *Sly People*. Even Peter and Beverly Schenckman have forsaken the glibness of horror (and phony respect about women) wherewithal. Aside from S.F. Browning's announced

post-production on Bayou Bloodbath two pictures, a logical return to form which hasn't yet arrived, and a strong wish again to have failed alone with next exploitation in general. As the country loses much of its regional flavor to the multinational franchise of commercialization, the style of off-the-cuff flagrancy that gave birth to swash-trash is only a hazy memory of a colorful three-business past.

Entertainment is more complex these days. Chancery-offices roles are still less affordable elsewhere in the Florida Everglades, but tourists these days mostly drive to cities north than Orlando. There at Walt Disney World, anyone can be complicitously stuck on Alligator Bayou, a new resort village with the look and feel of the Cajun culture of Baton Rouge. The reason is stated to include dirt paths, several fishing holes, and yes, a *Kane County*-style bistro.

Dave Friedman Triple Header By Charles Kagans

For too long, the films of producer David E. Friedman ("Majesty," "The Book of Exploitation") have been overwhelmed by those of his ex-partner, director Michael [sic] Gordon Lewis, the amoral "Blizard Of Gore." Friedman claims he's won the recent video release of over 100 of his exploitation titles from the squatish studio, The Defilers. Friedman's second Los Angeles feature, co-written with the adult comic artistically with a violent script from Friedman (who based on John Dostoevsky novel *The Collector*) and art nouveau from director Lee Pfeif.

The Defilers

Directed and photographed by R.L. Frost. Written and produced by David E. Friedman.

After moving to Los Angeles and serving as Associate Producer on the Candy Star radio cultie *My Tia Is Hot*, exploitation legend David E. Friedman hired Lee Pfeif, the partner of rival comic producer Bob Cason, to direct a film he hoped would bog wherever his own pictures could offer. The result was *The Defilers*, a brutal "cougar" that overwhelmed and out-grossed its competition around 1985 nationwide. Although *The Defilers* is one of Friedman's best films, accounts have been unfortunate since its debut because of subsequent public domain for blackmail while torturing.

The Defilers follows the amorous path of sadistic nihilist Carl (Dyron Metal) and his equally perverted gal Jennifer (Dorothy Dalia) as they sing kajago, make grime, dance with masochistic beach bunnies, and eventually kidnap and impregnate a beautiful young Milwaukeean (Mia Johnson) at the beginning of a tortured birthing owned by Carl's abandoned father. The hapless girl is made victim in the doc's cruelty and abuse, particularly from the unscrupulous Carl. She is starved, beaten, and raped before a violent fight between the irresponsible Jennifer and her androgynous model double her size.

Friedman's bleak tale of degradation suggests its main power is on the strength of Frost's ahabious direction and Pfeif's equally off-the-wall script, the mix of American and imperial action. Exploitation director Metal (a.k.a. Ron Elliot) portents the audience that

'THIS IS A SNATCH!

A SHATTERING STUDY OF THE SHAMELESS SICK-SET... FOR SHOCK-PROOF ADULTS...

THE Defilers

IT TAKES YOU DEEP INSIDE A SEETHING SHE-CREATURE!

a SMELL OF HONEY
a SWALLOW OF BRINE!

AN ADULT EXPERIENCE!



with a condescending, malevolent glow; reportedly Mabie agreed to re-cut the film when the drama master originally clung to play the role painted on the first day of shooting.

The *Bellmers* formula follows the film *Friedl* later made with Bob Coeze; more than those of Fischman; most of the latter's Encyclopedic Visions production substituted not for money. Nevertheless, their collaboration yields what an astrophysician as regularly the galactic will rough. It's ugly, but you can't look away.

A synthetic forewarning of subsequent sex films, *The Bellmers* is not only a meat-set for exploitation fans but as an expert artifact of a particular branch of American show business that linked with the arrival of home video and hardcore porn. The video debut of *The Bellmers* initiates an entire series of *curves-and-suspense* features produced by Friedman. The second of them, Friedman's fourth post-Lewish feature, holds the same anomalous title, *A Smell Of Honey, A Swallow Of Brine* (1966).

A Smell Of Honey, A Swallow Of Brine
Directed by R. Ron Elliott
(Ronald Miller)
Written and Produced by David E. Friedman

Walking a thin tightrope between the artful coitus of *The Bellmers* and Starlet's playful *as Experiments*, *A Smell Of Honey, A Swallow Of Brine* curiously maintains a straight line. This show of station shudders violently with Friedman's deliciously overripe images, a nervous collection of howlers that bubble underneath the film's hush exterior. That this camp is hopelessly dated only adds to the film's comical effect.

Shirley Walker is Shaele Weston, an office worker whose passion in reading her diary into account and then opening their advances with accusations of rape. Her false charges lead to the experimentation of a clean-cut young guy as the film opens, followed by the destruction of a sordid presenting officer (cover). Shirley's ex-worker Lowell Carter (Sam Melville), who she cold-turks until he catches a sleep,

for having dreams of being tied to a post and subjected to her ravage whilst Carter makes accusations as the doctor. Shirley covers up his kidfool with a smile. Later, the real Shirley agrees to communicate their affair but once again falidly tries rape. Driven mad with lust, Carter attempts to rape a woman and is killed by her husband. Unfixed, Shirley dates a newcomer, John (Ron Miller) whose latent beauty is suggested by her teasing.

The oddly out-of-junction of *A Smell Of Honey, A Swallow Of Brine* will no doubt rattle the ranks of the politically correct. Some will add that director William Kennedy Smith and will consider the film too something to partly date rape. Yet it could be argued that the film is right, that Friedman's bland series is pre-programmed for middle-browers and anti-porn crusaders. The clip of Matilda window-shoeing girls magnifies and then making a pretty housewife would fit in as an efficient presentation by either the American Family Association or Women Against Pornography. All told, the script lacks any definite point of view that would qualify it as a political statement. *A Smell Of Honey, A Swallow Of Brine* follows the meandering formula of marriage exploitation (a variation on "rip what you sow"), particularly with its source fade-out.

Though not self-consciously arty as *The Bellmers*, *A Smell Of Honey, A Swallow Of Brine* features crisp, carefully composed cinematography from Laszlo Kovacs (credited as "Art Redford"). [Indeed was Kovacs' second feature film in America, and that was *Daughters Of Fantasy* (1961), also with Shirley Weston.] The film further benefits from its appealing cast, particularly itself in Sam Melville's interview. The Rockwell as a poor network driver mad by hot Shirley, Shirley Walker manages to keep a straight face while delivering



ABOVE (Left to right): Cameraman Laszlo Kovacs, Director David E. Friedman, and Assistant Cameraman Myron Griffin on the set of *A Smell Of Honey, A Swallow Of Brine*



ABOVE: Two scenes featuring cult director Edward D. Wood, Jr. as a comical transvestite from Joseph F. Robertson's reactionary skin flick *Mrs. Stone's Thing*.

such grossness as, "I may be a bitch, but I'm not a b***h!" She also has the best epithet in the business:

Although it's in short of *The Delirious Instinct, A Smell Of Honey, A Sow Fair*, *Of Honey* represents a transition for the old-timey Shirley home. The film's various combinations of dogmatism, decadence and campy entertainment perhaps the first-finger evidence of their later productions for UTV—evidence of starting exploitation's checkered past. It's a role, all right, but one well worth doing off.

A third video release offers a collection of coming attractions replete with captions of previous production publications, including *Love Crash* (1988), *Bread & Honey* (1989), and *Trader Barnes* (1979). The *Laughing, Loring, Lampooning Lures Of David F. Friedman* is a treatment to the way with which Friedman designed previews for his films.

Most of the preview in that collection, however, is from the Friedman touch. Some offer a wild romp through over-the-top film shtick, while others adopt a more approach as an underground art form. They vary in style and in mood, ranging from the silly (*Trader Barnes, The Krinkles, Adventures Of Zorba*) to the macabre (*Love Crash*, *The Suckers*). Many throw with a witty barbs or puns.

Except for some indifferent notes on the back of the book, *The Laughing, Loring, Lampooning Lures Of David F. Friedman* is a trash hour's delight and a welcome look back. It's the trailer tape to beat in the new year.

(*The Bafflers, A Smell Of Honey, A Sow Fair*, *Of Honey*, *A Meadow Of Sobs*, and *The Laughing, Loring, Lampooning Lures Of David F. Friedman* are available from Something Weird Video. See ad inside back cover.)

Free Love Fallout by Charles Kigora

Connoisseurs of U.S. trash filmmaking cannot be blamed for indulging in occasional snatches of "spot the cycle." Early exploitative films derived from the pressing social problems of white alcohol and drug addiction, primarily to afford audiences the opportunity to see what happened to a kidnapped woman, sold "on the black" or in a pretty young man's depravity for her cash fix. These films, of course, were privately shown on the sly, as far away from the prying eyes of law enforcement officials as eddibles could manage. The namesake of Ruth Meyer's *The Innocuous Ms. Team* and others like the big-budget casting stunts against建立 in modern pictures, resulting in the gradual erosion of laws banning on-camera sex. Then, the "niche cult" moniker was born. In those days, simple, potted-voiced women in settings so whacked-out that no prosecutor could attack the film as appealing to juvenile interests. The setting of these flicks was most commonly a妓院 or brothel camp. The problem was that the long-ago addictions which validate flicks and provide erotica, albeit featuring naked women, without filling out?

Audience boredom with movie flicks led to the popularity of "roughies," the next breed. Roughies did not add audience boozed with the idea of getting up to speed with *Doris Wishman's Bad Girls Go To Hell* (1985) and David H. Friedman's *The Bafflers* (see above). Roughies were obviously set in whoredom, slave markets, and other forms of depravity. But by the mid-sixties another cycle began, the one ushered in by the free love movement. Suddenly adult flicks were swash with hippie chicks dancing in go-go bars and keeping their way through psychosexual orgies. The new sating was the commonality of oral sex, more often than not in San Francisco or Los Angeles. Although these

flicks were produced as they were made for the enjoyment of hippies themselves, the medium was actually the same as before, disseminated male-to-female who had attained maturity in a more sexually repressed era, and who now eyed the free love generation with a mixture of bemusement and envy. Unlike in the roughies, the willing women in the free love flicks expected no economic payment for their sexual favors, the experience itself was the payoff. Little imagination is needed to understand why men who had freed their balls first into a life of financial dunder would become about females who favored free love fucking over the desecrated institution of holy matrimony.

But in 1989, the year of *Mississippi Burning* and *Aladdin*, the hippie decade reached Hail-deadly, and, seemingly, many of the free love sages were mired with politics and petty criminality. The kernel of *Easy Rider* went dead by the roadside, and America, starved once again for a new direction, As years go, it was a bummer, man.

The following year, screenwriter/director Joseph F. Robertson summed up the death of the free love generation with *Mrs. Stone's Thing*, a softcore sex film that kicks rocks of desire into the ass of a disillusioned. His plain simple George Stone, a bummie-maniac who works for a middle-aged hedonist McWhalen (no, not Ed), refuses to allow his wife Martha to partake in the community-sponsored orgy in his front door. His best friends Rita and Phyllis, along with McWhalen himself, persuade George to bring her along. McWhalen has ultimate motives: he's been dying to ride the vibrator but casually survived (and thus, more challenging) Martha for some time. At the party, Martha finds across McWhalen (whose front door is the pretense of a room for husband George), Rita, and finally a generous Johnson. Finding his wife between the legs of the latter, George blows his stack. Back home, he and Martha confront the menage tell that their love is melting from direct marriage. They vow to avoid future

infidelity, and the film ends with the turn of an upending staff by the neck to the Stone residence. Mrs. Stone's "thing" is torn out, in marriage and motherhood.

Dated yet curiously poignant because of a crossover shift from "Traditional" values, Mrs. Stone's Thing represents a perspective from the American Family Association. McMurphy's urge, which consumes most of the film's running time, is a cozy quilt of easy look and feel that pre-holiday separations would allow. Upshot: cross-cutting shuffles scenes of flagellation, homosexuality, drug use, transvestism, racism, and other anomalies. The most repellent of these segments is the extreme scene between one couple who are so hideously fat that they must pull together two pool tables to serve as a bed for their amorous dalliance. The incident is the most gory of a comedy, approaching Ed Wood (but not the awfulness of Ed Wood) and the

gross-dread who it discovered winning the clothing of his best wife. Witnessing the late cult director's annual transvestite camp is up for laughs as a middle-aged man separating into woman's clothing and makeup it is truly understand, degradation and self-destruction. One can only hope that Ed Wood was well compensated for the indignity.

Wood's career is painful, but the heart and soul of Mrs. Stone's Thing covers either is one of the peripheral sketches that punctuate the orgy scene. A young man professes his post-coital love to a young bigger girl who looks at him with a slight smile of intent in her address. "I'd like to take you to Miami for dinner on Sunday," he confesses, on offerless delectus. As he heads for the door, his "girlfriend" stretches out her palm and reminds him that her love costs ten dollars.

[*Mrs. Stone's Thing* is available on Prentiss Scowring's *Asia Vista Under the Sun: The Sensuous Wife*.]

J'ACCUSE: The Passion Of Abel Gance

by Stephen H. Bassett

"You're afraid. Paul has scared you because you betrayed your dead." Paulistan, medium man who know no love! Hear the death rattle in those millions of throats - I Arrested I Arrested I Arrested!"

- Victor Francen in *Pauvre Jeanne* (1936)

Abel Gance's remake of his own *J'Accuse* (1938) has been too long denied its heritage as high-class anti-war film and a provocative and engaging masterpiece of the bourgeoisie. Criterion Video's recent release of a fully restored version will hopefully establish its proper niche in the history of both international cinema and the horror genre.

Film historian and archivist Bob Ellman presented the restored version of Abel Gance's *J'Accuse* at 1976's Toronto Film Festival and at FILMEX (Los Angeles International Film Exposition). It had never been previously seen in the U.S. in its complete form. Through one small offprint from earliest French restoration "definitive" — an Gance scholar Georges King has noted, "there is no such thing as a 'definitive' version... between Gance restored his films several times. In each of these versions, he made changes in different countries" — it is this version that Criterion has released, in even the less monitored over a ripple in the current video market's sensuously available theme for new releases.

Criterion's abridged American edition version, *That They May Live* (1939), was the only incarnation previously available. (See video from Senator Cinema.)

J'Accuse had rarely been screened in Europe, either following the 1936 premiere or with the film's return to the Nazi occupation of World War II. Though Gance clearly intended *J'Accuse* to be a provocative film, a rapidly approaching deadline from an even more devastating and pointed form of the-century attack against anti-Semitic and sexual intolerance, he cynically had it expedited to follow an already in-shoots *Zola* (footnote). But a year after the release of the former, Gance's gripping antiwar fantasy was judged inauspicious work.

J'Accuse was the title of the later renowned French writer and novelist Louis Zola composed in Captain Alfred Dreyfus defense. Dreyfus stood accused of writing an ungodly, treasonous message to the German command in 1894. (The German Empire had honored the purchased letter over to the French, sparing a vicious

trial and subsequent military tribunal against Dreyfus.) The evidence against Dreyfus was weak, and it was indicated that one Major Esterhazy was guilty.

Nationalism, the military's belligerence, especially culminated in the innocent Dreyfus being stripped of his rank and sentenced to life imprisonment on Devil's Island in 1895.

The trial and sentence was an explosive issue. Zola rallied to Dreyfus' defense, releasing the now-calling publication his *Open Letter under the Signature of J'Accuse* in Parisian newspapers.

J'Accuse in January 1898. Through Zola was promptly sentenced to one year in prison — a sentence he fled by sailing himself to the United Kingdom from 1898-99 —

J'Accuse joined 100 writers to ignore Zola's public statement to protest police corruption, incitement, and the demands were demanded, and the



ABOVE: Victor Francen as Jean Diaz in Abel Gance's 1938 *J'Accuse*.

subsequent) issue of legal proceedings led to Major Gascón being freed guilty while Díaz was reluctantly pardoned (but not exonerated).⁶

Gascón's cry of "¡Vivace!" had been heard, and edited throughout France as a pointed expression of outrage against military and societal cruelty. Two decades later – and again forty years later – filmmaker André Génier would appropriate the rallying cry for his own film of outrage against the forces of war.

Emerging from the Brussels theatrical scene as a performer, Gascón's acting career segued into the movies with *L'Amour et l'Amour* (1909). Disillusioned with the limited opportunities open to visitors to the new studios, Gascón began to make movies in Spanish studios, a few of which attracted prestigious directors such as Luis Peralta (Rancho Fina de Paquimé, 1910) and Alberto Capellani (La Marta de Béca, 1911; *Brigand et la Chie de Lune*, 1912; *Ruthless*, 1912; *Cyrano et d'Anjouy* and *Un Triplique*). Amador de Méndez (1912–2000, book 1995) writing on the early silent screen notes: "Gascón formed his own production company, Le Film Français, and launched his directorial efforts with *Le Digne (au Peur Sucre) à Hollandel* (1912). Among his partners was renowned actor Edouard des Max, who starred in *Le Rêve* (1912), *Le Marquis d'Amour* (1912), an early horror film which drew from the American *Fearless Grindle* (Gringott the Fox), and proved evidently profitable despite the poor quality of its silent release prints.

As his audience and gold became more assured, Gascón's flirtation with le fantastique had to produce *L'Amour et l'Amour* (1912) to *Le Digne (au Peur Sucre) à Hollandel* (1915). Although embellished by gaudy-pastiche cameras, it remained a candy-sauced experiment with amateur camera effects, serving a nightmarish about a mad scientist who creates a light ray capable of destroying anything itself. Nekpol and his company, Films d'Art, were furious. "It was wartime, the public needed encouragement, diversion – not something exposing such sin! That company refused to show it, Gascón was ordered to see the fine (with), without money and instant retribution."⁷

Disengaged, Gascón began a series of serviceable, periodically inspiring melodramatic thrillers for Nekpol, including *L'Éveil de la Bête Sauvage* (1915), wherein a

monstrous electrocuted (as electrocuted) telegrapher (Major Jean Anderson's *Martyr By Phone*, 1908). All were produced quickly and proved commercially successful. Gascón soon retranslated the lightning express upon him. Frustrated by the financial retranslation of his production when the distributor took advantage of postwar profits, Gascón packed the belongings along with La Bête à la Vie (1916), Mater (1916), and La Dixième Symphonie (1918), psychological dramas which advanced and refined Gascón's directorial skills even as they earned profits at the boxoffice.⁸ Though these received favorable and acknowledging reviews by the style of their time, their subtlety (which) pleased by the beauty of (short) imagery, Gascón was now in love with the screen, and his passion was evident in every shot.⁹

Indeed finished when suddenly the war was over, *La Bête à la Vie* was still a loss to know what to do with a propaganda film with no war to go with it. Abel changed the title around and turned it into the famous anti-war film we all know.¹⁰

Gascón refuted this version of events, insisting that Abel "had the right to command the first of a cinematic trilogy which would show the disastrous results of war, and the new society that could emerge from it."¹¹ Gascón lost many friends in the trenches – a fact bitterly reflected in both versions of *J'Accuse* – and his difficulty working with the military ended as he had little drafted evidence for his complaint for the war. He has also cited Henri Barbusse's war novel *Le Feu* as having a profound impact upon his studies. "Why should I tell it?"

"Therefore," Gascón was argued to writer Koen Broosdorff, "he was confronted with [Barbusse's] vision while Broosdorff acknowledged 'he might have created it' *J'Accuse* when the war was 'nearly over,' he also discovered among Gascón's personal letters and diaries some evidence to support Gascón's contention.

In 1916, Gascón, whose wife and three children were killed in the war, would not sleep at night and return to work.

Consequently, their house, to the tune of their sacrifice was worth nothing at all. The war would strip of its own ascent, humiliated by its own weakness.¹²

An earlier memorandum between Broosdorff and Gascón detailed a series of events that would seem to verify Gascón's claims. The filmmaker described to Broosdorff the filming of the opening scenes in which soldiers group to form the letters of the title, provoking commentary from a smirking Gascón who nevertheless permitted the filming to continue. Even more moving in Gascón's account of mobilizing two thousand soldiers on leave from the Verdun front for the filming of *J'Accuse* followed the shot showing that at all probability they'd be dead tomorrow before long. Gascón recalled: "Within a few weeks of thing started, eighty per cent had been killed."¹³



Nevertheless, World War I was still raging in Europe and Gascón was eventually mobilized into the military's cinematography unit and several recruitment reflections because of his poor health. Thus, Gascón conceived of the original *J'Accuse* (1918), the film which eventually earned the director international acclaim.

The film's origins are a point of some controversy. The French film was clearly a propagandistic and didactic historical venture, but *J'Accuse* might have been originally conceived with quite the opposite intent. Gascón's extremely obscure cinematographer, Louis-Henry Berth, claimed that *J'Accuse* began as a commission from producer for Charles Farbe, hence the unusual cooperation given the Farbe family was fully by the military.

With his assistant Blaise Cendrars who had lost his arm in the war, Gascón set to work. The film was



ABOVE: The front of the Rialto Theatre in Times Square, NYC for the second run of J'Aveux. Note how it is being pushed as a horror movie to the Times Square audiences.

Nevertheless, Gance was convinced with Gance's record in the military like many military catastrophes, Gance had indefinitely rescheduled filming French workers, since a number of his peers died trying to capture such a delicate on-camera. Gance was eventually assigned to make a film about "armies in war," yielding nothing before his departure from the filming and, a short time later, from the military. Returning to Film d'Art, Gance began work on the never-completed *Belle Poisson* (*Le Seigneur Nuit*) in April of 1918 until finances collapsed, leaving, fleeing to a hotel. Gance wrote to Charles Pichot, who granted him the means to make *J'Aveux*. Gance's presentation of the project, in whatever form it ended up, failed to lead to the military re-awakening Gance into the Cinematography Studio, where Gance joined Picard and Armand, both of them in the ranks of St. Maloch. The resulting footage was soon edited into *J'Aveux*.

It is entirely possible that Gance re-conceptualized his into war film into the military as a propaganda narrative in

order to assure their cooperation. This is pure speculation, but it might explain both Gance's and Givon's version both (though Gance never asserted that this was the case). At this difficult point in his career, Gance desperately needed to amass harmonious relations with both the military and his producer, allowing him to complete his film according to his own subjective agenda with minimal interference.

Barbara's allegations concerning *J'Aveux*'s dramatic status as a cinematic film will probably never be resolved, though the film's narrative – concerned as it is with romantic infidelity and the tragicomic durability of its lead male character rather than the male-military pacifist fantasy – lends some confidence to her claims. Unlike Gance's 1918 remake, the 1919 version's celebrated sequence in which the members of the council were run over the dead was presented as a character's delirium, a visionary chapter that engaged focus on aesthetic comic content like a belt of lightning. Subsequently and miraculously, it is almost as if afterwards, however,

despite lacking an impact. Whatever the truth behind its propagation, however,

J'Aveux was indeed the first film to question the war and an incisive film that did so with a vengeance.

J'Aveux positioned itself as "The Most Romantic Tragedy of Modern Times," and its narrative fulfilled that apprehension. It revises the tradition in the romantic example between childhood friends François Léon (Savanna-Mars) and Jean Dier (François-Joseph Léon), now adopted love with Edith (Marie Darzens). François has become her sometimes brutal husband, but first appears for brawling and blood counter to the post-Jean's sensitive, visionary nature. Their amazingly incompatible natures will the almost alienated bond between them, as if they were a "complete case" only in comparison with one another, in the core of Givon's film.

François and Jean's rivalry extends into their serving Higher-ups in the war, where Jean first acts as François' superior in their shared battalion, later returning as a private

under François's command. The old and stiff of body, mind, and moodiness - Jean can't even manage a dignified handshake and the stiff administration charges to be used against the war shell - is further fueled by Eléanor's dejection; uncomprehending, she sits with a child, and subsequent estrangement from François. Ultimately François is mortally wounded during a famous battle, and Jean returns into shell shock and insanity. In stark juxtaposing terms, the narrative's inevitable conclusion has been reached without François, Jean must surely die. Gance's final scene, however, edges J'Accuse out of the states of muddlehead and into the unknown.

Returning to the battlefield and finding his way back to Eléanor, Jean gathers the villagers at her home. His condition rises with rows of three dead, slain in the war, and his vision of the corpsps lying on stretchers from the battlefield to march in processions against the living. "They're on the stretch! They're coming! They will be here soon and you will have no answer for yourselves! They will return to kill us again!" Gance's staging of the sequence was unlike anything seen before in cinema.

As the dead rise up, Gance splits the screen across the middle, one side showing the Field of the Dead with the Victoria Peacock and the Arc de Triomphe. The ridiculous march through the countryside is shown in every possible way, with superimposed horns, trucks, and varying shaped masks - all tinted a somber purple.²⁴

Horrified by the vision, the village flat Justine runs to her husband Georges for yet more pacific geometry. Thinking it safe, he turns against his Mate. "My dubious sense of patriotism has become 'Patriot'." In a crescendo against an impressionistic montage of bedsheet and scarred battle-ground, "And I see you. See, of having given light to the appalling leg!" As the two sets off right field, Justine erupts.

Commenting on Gance's overabbreviated version of the original J'Accuse, Norman Mailer argued that the inadmissible dual narrative, at the expense of the epic,²⁵ The meliorism dominated Gance's complete version too, making it accessible to audiences even as it left them unprepared and overwhelmed by the horrific costs. J'Accuse provided a timely and truly horrifying warning for Britain's war-time sensibilities, opening as it did mere days after the signing of the Armistice and the first World War (a fact which further compromises Leonce Hervé Blau's allegations).

Sadly J'Accuse was spurned by American audiences. The US government commission established to review foreign films for importation into the U.S. was ever "alert for subversive pacifism and so on,"²⁶ and J'Accuse was clearly suspect. With Fatty unable to secure an audience, distribution through existing commercial channels, Gance ventured to America himself with a re-edited version for its New York debut in the Rialto Cinema. Among the audience was D.W. Griffith, who was so moved by the film that he presented United Artists partners Charles Chaplin,

Douglas Fairbanks, and Mary Pickford to distribute the film. Its eventual limited US distribution in 1920 was a failure, an anti-war American film that had no audience to forgive differences and now sought acceptance rather than gain commercialization, however reluctantly wrought.

Posthumously the "pacifist much" aspect of later gurus' discourse such as Frankenstein (1931), Psycho (1960), and The Tenant (1976), appears to indicate either a desire to highlight the film from the era it represented or a desire to romanticize it. Aesthetically, Gance's phenomenally popular success in France, Britain, and all of Europe, the shock that so offend audiences, however, carried a potent historical message. If the film had been shown in every country and in every town in the world in 1919,²⁷ a Prague newspaper's sense of the time proclaimed, "Then perhaps there would have been no war."²⁸ P. Astars was an international cause célèbre, praised by the movie critic D.W. Griffith himself, with 25-year-old Gance revered as France's greatest filmmaker.

Gance contrasted with the equally successful La Rose (1923) - Jean Cocteau said, "There is a certain before and after La Rose" - following it with his disillusion masterpiece Napoléon (1927). Over a dozen years later, though, Gance's star had faded. His international prominence ended and in the shadow of Napoléon's more ample, less initial discomfort with sexual content, and his lack of a clear protagonist, he suffered and failed in a trend prevalent in Hollywood cinema, "made it fit for mass audiences" (and, in effect, the more it was not concerned to meet emerging feature-length). Gance had reduced the film to 4,250 minutes (approximately 125 minutes) to be shown in three episodes, and finally it was re-edited in 1952 [to 2,200 minutes] (King, *Book*, pg. 238), which may have influenced the editing Gance had done for the unsuccessful US release with a running time (approximately 30 minutes) comparable to that of the 1959 US release of Gance's remake in *They Shall Not Live*.

[Stephen R. Bassett's *J'Accuse: The Passion of Abel Gance* continues next issue with the filmmaker's biopical remembrance of his silent classic.]

NOTES

- Bob Harris subsequently founded his own production company, Film Prose Ltd., and most recently co-produced the celebrated remakes of David Lean's Lawrence of Arabia and Ken Russell's *Empire*.
- Norman Mailer, *Abel Gance: A Politics of Spectacle* (NY: Publishing, 1954), pg. 5.
- Note the coincidental release of Wim Wenders's Academy Award-winning *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers* in 1973, the year Gance was filming his remake of *J'Accuse*.
- An edition of *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 5th Edition, edited by Margaret Drabble, Oxford University Press, 1985, pg. 259, 1088, 96.
- Karen Brownlow, *The Parade's Gone By*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1996, pg. 326.
- The title of one of Gance's features from that period, *La Zouz de la Mort* (1917), suggests a Bataille's preoccupation with death. Despite the exception,

title, La Zouz de la Mort appears to be a romantic meditation that may today disconcert. I have been unable to source a print to confirm this.

- Karen Brownlow, *Napoleon: Abel Gance's Classic Film*, Routledge, Cape Ltd. (U.K.), 1983, pg. 25.
- Laurence Olivier, *Round Table Conference*, BBC/British Avant-Garde Film, quoted from Brownlow, *Ibid*, pp. 26-28.
- King, *Abel Gance: A Politics of Spectacle*, pg. 33.
- This paragraph, and the quotes included in the preceding sentence, are from Brownlow, *Napoleon*, pg. 28.
- Brownlow, *The Parade's Gone By*, pp. 532-533.
- Brownlow, *Ibid*, pp. 531-532.
- Albel Gance, *J'Accuse, La Lutte Maréchaliste*, Paris, 1922, as translated by Brownlow, *The Parade's Gone By*, pg. 336.
- Brownlow, *Ibid*, pg. 337.
- King, *Abel Gance*, pg. 136. Note the lengths of Gance's three respective versions of his silent *J'Accuse* according to King. The feature which opened on April 25, 1919 ran 2,250 minutes, approximately three hours and fifteen minutes. In his comprehensive analysis (and, indeed, the one that is not concerned to meet emerging feature-length), Gance had reduced the film to 4,250 minutes (approximately 125 minutes) to be shown in three episodes, and finally it was re-edited in 1952 [to 2,200 minutes] (King, *Book*, pg. 238), which may have influenced the editing Gance had done for the unsuccessful US release with a running time (approximately 30 minutes) comparable to that of the 1959 US release of Gance's remake in *They Shall Not Live*.
- Brownlow, *Ibid*, pg. 538.
- Brownlow, *Ibid*, pg. 533.
- Quoted from Brownlow, *Ibid*, pg. 531.
- Brownlow, *Napoleon*, pg. 183.
- Facility for the 1939 US release dictated by silent *J'Accuse*'s inaptitude for two plays. Hans von Chinchin's *Miracle at Verdun* (1931) and Levin Shain's *Bury the Dead*.
- An obvious homage precedes the final shot of Louis Malle's classic *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), based on Erich Maria Remarque's pacifist novel. Malle's superimposed a procession of German soldiers over a French country-side littered with corpses and gas tanks; as they march, the spectators continually pause to look back at the audience's agony.
- Also note *J'Accuse*'s filmic editing techniques, which Gance's editor refused to truly acknowledge, replying to a question (with all due frosty formality) in *La Rose*, pre-dating the Russian silent features that have been unashamedly credited with such cinematic innovations.

NEXT ISSUE: The Wild World Of Doug Hobart: *J'Accuse* Part Two! Twisted Sex! More bizarre video!

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